3: Roberts S-4 (no date)1951 EDl Rumania EDl

Maniu naturally refused the offer, and Vintilă Brătianu declared his intention to continue as head of the government.

In the winter and spring of 1927–28, the National Peasants extended their attacks on what they called the usurping government. Maniu embarrassed the government in its efforts to obtain a foreign stabilization loan by declaring on December 22, that his party disapproved of the new budget and that a government without the support of the nation was not in a position to receive foreign loans.[24] In January, 1928, the National Peasants sent representatives abroad, to Paris, London and Berlin, to persuade foreign opinion that the Liberals lacked national approval.

Large protest meetings were held throughout Rumania, climaxed by a massive peasant demonstration in Alba Iulia on May 6. This demonstration aroused great excitement and some apprehension, but it ended in a slightly ludicrous vein. Thousands of peasants came from all over Rumania, though principally from Transylvania, to attend a dramatic denunciation of the Liberals, but at the conclusion of the rally the leaders were at a loss as to what should be done next—a problem that always plagued the Peasant leaders. Some of the more ardent ones wanted to prepare a "March on Rome," and indeed a column of peasants did march off in the direction of Bucarest, but dispersed on the way. Other leaders favored a moderation in sharp contrast to the violence of the oratory, which had blasted the government as the "enemy of the people." Most humiliating, the National Peasants were forced to appeal to the government to provide rail transport to return the peasants to their homes. But despite this touch of *opéra bouffe*, the demonstration was an impressive display of the opposition's ability to call out the peasantry.

It is quite possible, however, that the government was less worried by the direct threat of these measures than by their effect in increasing the difficulty of obtaining a stabilization loan, the principal preoccupation of Vintilă Brătianu during his year in office and his principal excuse for remaining in power. In the summer of 1928 the loan threatened to be the rock which would wreck the government. In July Vintilă Brătianu convoked the chamber in extraordinary session to report on his negotiations and to get authorization to obtain an external loan of up to $250,000,000. The National Peasant depu-

24. It should be added, however, that Maniu had not blocked discussion or voting on the budget. On December 27 the National Peasant representatives Madgearu and Popovici, while repeating that the Liberal government did not have legal authority to contract foreign loan, stated that if it did succeed the National Peasants would not subsequently refuse to recognise the undertaking, but would respect engagements taken, however unjustifiably, in the name of the state.

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175 ties boycotted the assembly, formed their own gathering, and resolved that laws passed by the Liberal chamber could not bind the Rumanian nation. Vintilă Brătianu tried to persuade the regency that he should remain in office until the loan negotiations were completed. Ultimately, his delays and in particular his request that even after the completion of the negotiations he be permitted to retain office to supervise the application of the loan brought him into conflict with the regents, who were anxious to calm the political situation. Overestimating his position, he resigned on November 3 and dropped the negotiations.

To his surprise his resignation was accepted. The regents consulted Maniu and Averescu on the formation of a coalition cabinet; Maniu would make no agreement except on the basis of new and free elections. The regents requested Titulescu to form a coalition cabinet; Titulescu failed. Finally, the regents were obliged on November 9 to call upon Maniu to form his own cabinet.

Thus ended the long regime of the Brătianus. The combination of two failures contributed to their defeat. Politically they failed to obtain the mass support of the peasants, necessary under universal suffrage, but were unwilling, or unable, to adopt measures to prevent the rise of an effective opposition. Economically, they were unable to restore either the national finances or the condition of agriculture. The stabilization loan and the bad harvest of 1928 directly contributed to their downfall, but the continuing economic uncertainty and instability of the postwar years always gave the opposition a long stick with which to belabor them.

Composition and Political Principles of the Liberals

665 Although the National Liberal party[25] was pleased to trace its origins to the group of young Rumanian intellectuals who had been inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution of 1848, the temper of the Brătianu party in the 1920's bore a far greater resemblance to the rigid and narrowly conceived liberalism of Guizot in the latter years of the July monarchy. In both cases there was the same curious combination of a not unimpressive austerity with the crassest manifestations of the spirit of "enrichissez-vous." The limitations of the Brătianus' conception of political liberty should be evident from

25. This was the party's official title. The word national has usually been omitted in this paper to avoid possible confusion with the term, National Peasant, which indicates the actual fusion of two distinct parties.

671 preparing a system of regional decentralization which would largely have satisfied the desires of the minorities.

662 Having to rely upon an inefficient administrative staff, with the various autonomous State departments still filled with supporters of the Opposition, and the latter hampering and undermining the government's attempt to clear up the mess in which the country had been left, it was hardly possible to expect that the government of M. Maniu could effect the miraculous change that was expected of it. In order to counteract the underhand machinations of its Liberal opponents, who did not scruple even to sap its credit abroad by circulating scurrilous attacks on it among foreign banking institutions, while at home they brought pressure to bear on the Regency (which had been elected at their dictation) to create irritating hindrances to the smooth working of the government's plans, the latter at last allowed itself to be won over to what at the time was a fairly popular view, namely that of permitting the former Crown Prince Carol to return and ascend the throne. His advent was reckoned as likely to strengthen the hands of the Government, for he shared with the National Peasant Party the hostility of the Bratianus. Carol II, however, after his accession to the throne on June 8th, 1930, began to manifest a distinct predilection for autocratic measures. He arbitrarily removed from his post the able Rumanian Minister in Paris, M. Diamandi, a man who had distinguished himself for years by his devoted and brilliant service to his country, and nominated a personal friend whose sole qualification for this important diplomatic post was that he was a racing man. He estranged both M. M. Maniu and Vaida-Voevod by unconstitutionally interfering in the government, and thereby provoked the resignation of both. As he did not yet feel himself strong enough to dissolve the Chamber he allowed the National Peasant Party to form another Cabinet with M. Mironescu at its head, but he imposed on them as colleague an outsider in the person of M. Manoilescu, another personal friend of his. An attempt was made to form a Coalition Cabinet to be presided over by M. Titulescu, but as this failed the Mironescu Cabinet was tolerated for a time because it was conducting negotiations for a loan, and a premature

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10: Logio 3-4 (no date) 1922 ED1 Rumania ED1
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563 did little to foster their civic development at the time when Transylvania formed a part of their kingdom, and this has been most lucidly exposed by Dr Seton-Watson in his book, "Corruption and Reform in Hungary." Nevertheless, this intercourse, whatever its momentary drawbacks may have been in the past, has influenced very favourably the Rumanian element, a matter that would seem to confirm once more the theory of Professor Wm. McDougall that "the development of the group spirit in general and of national self-consciousness in particular is favoured by, and indeed dependent upon, conditions similar to those which develop the self-consciousness of individuals, by intuition, by conflict, by compulsion, and by co-operation." (V. "The Group Mind," page 165.)

563 662 In general, it may be admitted that the minorities have been more favoured by the Bucarest Government than the Rumanian majority of Transylvania, for the latter, except during the time the Maniu Government was in power, was always in the ranks of the Opposition, and as such it could not reckon on obtaining any bounties, while the support of the minorities was very often secured by the dispensation of various privileges. Even in the economic field the minorities could reckon on a certain financial support which Budapest generously granted to their industrial and banking firms, while corresponding Rumanian establishments in Transylvania were stinted of all help from Bucarest because it was the policy of the Bratianus to stifle every enterprise that had not come within the orbit of the Liberal party, and for this purpose they did not hesitate to employ the most unscrupulous methods.

563 668 The Magyar minority is undoubtedly better off than the Rumanians of Transylvania from many points of view, and this is the reason why all Magyar propositions for offering the Hungarian throne to King Carol II have not been viewed favourably at Bucarest. It is felt that the Rumanian population has not yet been able to rise overmuch, from both the cultural as well as the economic point of view, and that it is still dominated by the Magyars. It is felt also that a personal union with Hungary under the common sceptre of a Rumanian King would mean the consolidation of the

10: Logic S-4 (no date) 1932 ED1 Rumania ED1

insatiable passion for the means wherewith they may be secured.

Venomous rivalries are engendered and mortal envies excited in the pursuit of such narrow and base aims. Antagonism between political men in Rumania is bitter and uncompromising because they are brought into mutual conflict by personal motives. They are always absorbed in their ambitions and grievances, and they reject all compromise, ready as they are to destroy if possible their opponents, for to them they naturally ascribe the same base motives by which they themselves are impelled. As they are seldom inspired by loyalty and devotion to any higher ideal they cannot recognize that their antagonists may pursue other than purely egoistic motives. Hence the intolerance and bitterness of the feuds among political factions.

In such an environment it is the unscrupulous and the unprincipled who float to the top, and by a system of alliances between big business and political bosses that smacks of American methods, the whole machinery of State is attuned to the express purpose of exploiting the masses for the benefit of the oligarchy at the head of affairs. No wonder that such methods check the vitality and the progress of any society within which they should happen unfortunately to appear, all the more so since there is a tendency to perpetuate themselves and become a permanent system.

Professor E. A. Ross, of Wisconsin, in his "Social Psychology," says: "The men society allows to succeed and to be honoured are taken as models by the rising generation. It is in this that society receives its just punishment when it allows bad men to float to the top. Being imitated by the young, they spread their virus throughout the social body. Not the crook in the alley is the greater menace, but the crook in office."

Corruption has been instilled from above and it is hopeless to expect salvation from these upper strata of Rumanian society so far as the old kingdom is concerned. Transylvania, the cradle of the Rumanian people, which fortunately has not been contaminated by the Phanariot taint may perhaps prove the source from which eventually there may be regeneration from below by helping to reopen the sluices and

12: Kosmos S-4, 5 (no date) 1944
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who eventually joined forces and formed the National Peasant Party, pressed for the extension and enactment of the agricultural reforms promised in 1917. This was delayed owing to the pressure of the great landed interests who, after the disappearance of the pro-German Conservative Party, had found a new champion in the Liberals. The elections, however, brought a decisive defeat for the Liberals, and King Ferdinand had to entrust the formation of a new government to the victorious Peasant Block. In it were Dr Lupu, who in 1917 had opposed the plans for land reform on the ground that they were inadequate, Vaida-Voevod, a close collaborator of Manîu, and Mihalache, who as Minister of Agriculture proceeded to carry out the land reform.

General Averescu left this new administration within a few days in order to create a new party in opposition to the Peasant Block. Intrigues at court soon secured the fall of the government, which was succeeded by an administration headed by Averescu whose personality was a guarantee that nothing would be done to abrogate the real power of the privileged classes. At the very efficiently 'managed' subsequent elections the General secured 209 out of 369 parliamentary seats. It was obvious that he was dependent on the support of the Liberals and the bureaucracy who preferred, for the time being, not to step into the foreground. Averescu's Minister of Agriculture, Garoflid, was the spokesman of the big landowners and it was he who finally put the land reform into practice. The social structure of the country was not basically altered. Moreover, the transfer of land to the peasants now made it possible

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12: Kornos S-4, 5 (no date) 1944
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to blame other factors for whatever might go wrong as there was no *boier*-class left. The invisible, but much more effective, financial control, continued to assure the rule of the same classes who had governed the country before.

Soon the Liberal Party again took over the government. I. Bratianu was the undisputed chief of his party and had the confidence of the king. His whole policy was directed towards the strengthening of the power of the interests he represented. This, combined with his hostility towards the Soviet Union and Hungary had serious consequences which, however, became apparent only several years after his death.

THE MONARCHY. King Ferdinand, who had been crowned at Alba Julia in 1923, died in 1927. This caused a serious crisis, for two years earlier the Crown Prince Carol had been forced to abdicate in favour of his infant son Michael. After Ferdinand's death a Regency Council of three was appointed to act in the king's name until he came of age. The Regents were naturally strongly influenced by Bratianu, but, when he died in 1928, the leader of the National Peasant Party was entrusted with the formation of a new government. Maniu secured a great electoral victory and his tenure of office was expected to bring about far-reaching changes. The new administration set about solving the minority question and the serious economic problems resulting from the incomplete land reform which instead of bettering had often worsened the lot of the peasants. Unfortunately at that time the world crisis had reached its worst stage. Although his

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government had the majority of the people behind it, Maniu was handicapped by sabotage on the part of the bureaucracy, the banks and the great industrialists. Moreover he found it very difficult to work with the Regency Council, especially in such a critical time, as very frequently it could not reach a unanimous decision.

All these circumstances seemed to make the restoration of Carol inevitable. Maniu therefore arranged for the return of Carol to Rumania, but made his accession to the throne conditional upon several undertakings, amongst which was a royal promise to respect the Constitution. Carol returned by plane on 8 June 1930 and was proclaimed King, his son Michael being unceremoniously relegated to the position of Crown Prince. Many high hopes were pinned on Carol whose youth and intelligence were held to be qualities which should make him a good ruler. But the head-strong young monarch, with his ideas of personal rule, soon disillusioned those who had enabled him to return. Before long Maniu resigned and the first period of Carol's personal regime began.

THE PEOPLE. During all these years the people of Rumania had hoped for an improvement of their position. After the first few years of adjustment to the changes consequent upon the World War, it had become apparent that all misfortunes could not be blamed upon the war. The Agrarian Reform which was to have cured all ills had turned out to be a very questionable blessing. The recovery of industry which had a promising start in the middle twenties, when considerable amounts of foreign

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The Iron Guard was originally part of the Moldavian and Bessarabian anti-Semitic movement led by Professor Cuza. Amongst his pupils was Codreanu who formed the 'Legion of the Archangel Michael', a terrorist organization modelled on the Fascist and Nazi pattern and supported by Germany and Italy. Codreanu began his political career with the assassination of the prefect of police of Jasi, the blackmail of Jews and the persecution of progressive organizations. His adherents were poor students of the type which in Germany formed the core of the Nazi movement, the lower clergy, army officers and civil servants. His anti-Semitic and anti-Bolshevik slogans sounded attractive to certain big business men, high army officers and the higher clergy who gave him their support. The king regarded the Iron Guard with favour, for it seemed an excellent weapon for weakening the country's democratic forces and preparing the way for his own, undisguised dictatorship. Accordingly the crimes of the Iron Guard were not punished and the activities of her adherents remained unchecked. 668 643 668

In order to exploit the international situation, which was only too favourable for dictatorship, Carol began with an intensive propaganda, taking the slogans of Fascism, National Socialism and the Iron Guard, and laying particular stress upon his desire to rule with the help of the young generation. The schools and universities were militarized and the defence of the country made one of the daily watchwords. By ruling with non-party cabinets and playing off one party against the other Carol undermined the strength of the Liberals and the adherents of Maniu and Mihalache. From both parties he 643 208 643 662

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662 attracted personalities who were willing to abjure
643 their political faith and serve the Crown.

While continuing to pay lip-service to the League
643 of Nations, he supported the Italian campaign in
648 Abyssinia by sending food and war material to Italy. During the Spanish Civil War propaganda in favour of Franco was allowed and supported, while anything in favour of the Republican cause was banned.[1]

The result of the elections in December 1937, on
643 the eve of Hitler's seizure of Austria, precipitated
665 events. The government of the day, headed by the Liberal Tatarescu, failed to secure the necessary 40% of the votes and resigned.[2] Carol refused to entrust Maniu with the formation of a government; and the Iron Guard had by now assumed such a hostile attitude towards the king that a compromise with them was out of the question. Consequently Carol called the 'National Christian Front' to power, an anti-Semitic and Fascist organization led by the poet Goga and Professor Cuza. Goga became Prime Minister and his cabinet contained former members of the Liberal and Peasant Parties who now went over to the absolutist camp, as well as the future 'Conducator'[3] Antonescu.

[1] General Cantacuzino and several legionaries joined Franco and when two of them were killed their coffins were carried all over Rumania with great processions and interred at the headquarters of the Iron Guard in the presence of German, Italian, Spanish and Japanese representatives. At the same time collectors for the Republican cause were imprisoned. Nevertheless there were many Rumanians fighting for the Republicans in the 'Dimitrov' battalion.

[2] The result was: Government 35·9%, Peasant Party 20·4%, Iron Guard 15·5%, National Christian Front 9·1%.

[3] Leader.